



The History of Hoyle Memorial Methodist Church

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by

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THE HISTORY OF HOYLE MEMORIAL METHODIST CHURCH

In 1944 a strong feeling had developed that a Methodist Church should be organized in the east section of Shelby. During this year definite plans began to be made for the organization of a church. Two committees were formed to study the community and to decide what steps needed to be taken to organize a church. One committee composed of laymen from Central Methodist Church included Horace Grigg, Charles Hoey, Durant Crowder, Thad Ford, and George Hoyle; and the other committee, composed of Methodists from the east section of Shelby, included D. D. Rollins, H. H. Howard, J. T. Barber, Miss Leola Allen, and Miss Inez Allen.

On September 17, 1944 these two committees met at the Jefferson School with the Rev. E. M. Jones, District Superintendent, and other interested people from the community. On this day it was definitely decided that a Methodist Church should be organized in East Shelby. At this same meeting, a donation of \$100 was given toward a building fund; and it was decided that the new church would be named Hoyle Memorial in honor of the late Rev. Robert M. Hoyle, a native of the Belwood section of Cleveland County. The Rev. Mr. Hoyle had been a famed circuit rider and presiding elder who for more than fifty years had been a leader in the Methodist Church in the Western North Carolina Conference.

With 56 charter members the newly organized church held services in the Jefferson School. Funds were set up for a full-time pastor; however, at the Annual Conference in October, 1944 Hoyle Memorial was unable to obtain a pastor due to a shortage of ministers within the Conference at the time. The people would not be discouraged. They soon learned that Dr. J. H. Barnhardt, a retired minister living in Shelby, was immensely interested in their church. Dr. Barnhardt agreed to take over the pastorate of the church, and in November, 1944 he was appointed to the church by Bishop Purcell.

On Sunday, November 5, 1944 the church school was organized with 60 members and a collection of \$8.88. Dr. Barnhardt held the first regular church service on this day and he continued to serve the church faithfully until his death on January 21, 1945.

On February 28, 1945 Ex-Chaplain J. L. Pittard was appointed pastor of Hoyle Memorial for the remainder of the Conference year. During this year the church traded the lot, inherited from the Johnson Memorial Church, on the corner of Buffalo and Jefferson Streets for the lot the church presently occupies. Also during 1945 the church purchased a four-room parsonage at 604 Lincoln Street.

At the Annual Conference of 1945, the Rev. D. L. Stubbs was appointed pastor of Hoyle Memorial and he and his wife labored faithfully for the church during the following three years. Hoyle Memorial was slowly increasing in membership and the building fund was likewise progressing. The Rev. Mr. Stubbs and his wife helped the members of the church put on suppers, bazaars, plays, etc., in an effort to raise money for an educational plant. On October 30, 1947 ground was broken for a \$50,000 educational plant. On June 20, 1948 the congregation of Hoyle Memorial left the Jefferson School and held its first service in the new educational building.

In 1948 the Annual Conference assigned the Rev. S. G. Ferree to the pastorate of Hoyle Memorial and he served faithfully until the beginning of his fourth year when it became necessary for him to retire due to illness. Again Central Methodist Church came to the rescue by allowing their Educational Director, Mr. Weldon Bayliss, to fill the vacant pulpit. Through his work Mr. Bayliss endeared himself to all the members of Hoyle Memorial.

During June of 1952, the Rev. Zane G. Norton was appointed to the pastorate of Hoyle Memorial and has been retained since that time. Through his influence and enthusiasm, the members of Hoyle Memorial Church are once again hard at work trying to raise money. This time it is for a badly needed sanctuary.

During the past nine years Hoyle Memorial has grown slowly but strongly. Its influence has certainly been felt in this community; and it is continuing to grow, to develop better citizens, and to serve the community as a whole. With a start of 56 members Hoyle Memorial now has a membership of approximately 190 members. The \$50,000 educational plant has been paid for with the exception of \$8,000. A building fund, with approximately \$6,000 at present, is steadily increasing toward the payment of our proposed \$40,000 sanctuary. To maintain payments on the educational plant, to maintain a church budget of over \$7,000 per year, and to pledge \$5,000 yearly to a building fund, it has been necessary for the majority of the members of Hoyle Memorial to maintain a tithing program. In monetary terms it appears that Hoyle Memorial is a long way off from having a sanctuary; yet with the determination and spirit shown by the Methodists in East Shelby, it shouldn't be too long before this community sees a new construction program underway.

(Compiled on September 5, 1953 by Miss Nydia Early, Miss Leola Allen, and Mr. Robert G. Laney, Jr.)